

April 25, 1979

LB 221

PRESIDENT: Any objections? So ordered. All right, proceed then to agenda item #6, Special Order. As I understand the Speaker, Senator Brennan is absent so therefore we will pass over LB 444 and go to the second bill up for Special Order today, LB 221. Mr. Clerk, if you will bring us up to date.

CLERK: (Read title to LB 221.) The bill was first read on January 11 of this year. It was referred to the Miscellaneous Subjects Committee for a public hearing. On April 2 of this year Senator Murphy made a motion to place the bill on General File pursuant to Rule 3, Section 10. That motion prevailed. We now have before us, Mr. President, the bill offered by Senator Kelly. I have several amendments pending.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Kelly. We will have an explanation of the bill first and then any amendments, Senator Kelly, so if you will proceed.

SENATOR KELLY: Mr. President, members of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature, I am the introducer of LB 221, the bill to raise the drinking age from nineteen to twenty-one for legal drinking in our state. I offer three reasons for this. One is medical. Another is social activity or accidents, the condition in which our society is in at this time and the public support that exists for raising the drinking age to twenty-one. It must be understood to understand LB 221, that drinking alcohol on a regular basis for teenagers is detrimental physiologically, psychologically, socially and morally and I submit at this time a statement by Dr. Zako, Michigan Medical Association in testifying before the Federal District Court in Michigan on the constitutionality of their initiative petition to put the drinking age in Michigan at twenty-one. Dr. Zako testified that the body makeup of individuals in their late teens is such is that there is a ratio of muscle tissue to fat in the body not found in older adults and this results in a more rapid metabolism of alcohol, the alcohol having a greater effect on young persons in this age group. The doctor also testified as did other witnesses that there is no doubt that alcohol is the number one drug of abuse in the United States and that there is a salutary effect in keeping young people from being introduced to alcohol any sooner than necessary. Additionally Dr. Zako indicated that this period in young persons lives was one of emotional and psychological instability and that in these transition years alcohol had a serious effect more pronounced than it